(c) whether it is a fact that farm products from India are not allowed in US and Canada;

(d) if so, the reason therefor; and

(e) whether Government have taken any action to get the ban removed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) In accordance with the economic liberalization policy being followed since 1991 and also in accordance with our international commitments, all the quantitative restrictions on imports, earlier being maintained on account of balance of payment reasons have been removed. The items on which these QRs have been removed include farm products also. Import of onion is also free. However, import of all primary agricultural products is subject to a Sanitary, Phyto-Sanitary import permit, to be issued by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, as per conditions of Plants, Fruits and Seeds (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 1989.

(c) to (e) There is no ban on import of farm products from India into Canada. However, import of farm produce is subject to quarantine and health regulations prescribed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Farm produce is allowed into the US. However, for a few agricultural items *(i.e.* mangoes) the high phyto-sanitary standards set by the US Food and Drug Administration may occasionally prove difficult to meet. APEDA has been working on specific projects about these problems.

Ban on import of Arecanuts

179. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCEAND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the falling prices of arecanuts and related arecanut products, if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether it is a fact that the areca growing farmers of Kamataka are badly hit by the fall of price;

(c) whether it is a fact, that import of arecanut is one of the reason for fall of price; and

(d) whether Government propose to ban import of arecanut or impose heavy duty, if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY):

(a) and (b) There has been a decline in the prices of arecanuts and its products due to good production and reluctance of the buyers to offer a remunerative price.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Government has already increased import duty on arecanut from 35% to 100% last year.

Ban on Import of Coconut

180. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to large scale import of coconut and its products, south Indian farmers are suffering and not able to meet the cost of production due to fall in prices; and

(b) if so, whether Government have any plan to ban the import or proposing higher import duties and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJTV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) In accordance with the economic liberalization policy being followed since 1991 and also in tune with India's international commitments, all the quantitative restrictions on imports of commodities, earlier being maintained on account of balance of payment reasons have been removed. The items on which these QRs have been removed include coconut and coconut products also. However, import of copra and coconut oil is allowed only through State Trading Regime and the exclusive agency for import of these products is State Trading Corporation (STC).

To provide adequate protection to the coconut farmers in the country, the import duty on coconut and copra has been increased from 35% to 70% in the budget for the year 2001-2002. Similarly, the import duty on coconut oil has also been increased. Whereas the increase in the case of coconut oil (crude) is from 45% to 75%, the import duty on refined coconut oil has been raised from 45% to 85%.